

MARCH 1932

RECKLESS RALPH'S

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

OFFICIAL ORGAN-HAPPY HOURS BROTHERHOOD.

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The original of this issue, carried upon it's cover, A SENSATIONAL LURID WOODCUT OF THE 1870's, with the following printed below it:

"This spirited lurid woodcut appeared on the front page of BOYS OF NEW YORK, August 27, 1877-No. 106-and if you think it is not a rare one, try to get a copy today ! This smashing picture marked the opening instalment of a new story-"Bang-Up, the Boy Ranchero," by Hart Bernard (probably a pen-name for some capable writer on the publisher's staff). The legend under the cut was: "Bang-Up read the notice to the end; then he burst into a loud laugh that echoed horribly in that lonely place; tore the placard and crammed it into his pocket, and dashed onward." Here is interest and action for you ! As BOYS OF NEW YORK was a big eight-page folio sheet, you can form some idea of what a sensational smash this woodcut was. An illustration of a complete front page of this famous nineteenth century boys' story paper, appeared in our July number.

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## THE DIME NOVEL

Its place in American Literature.

By Ralph F. Adimare.

### II

THE PRE-DIME NOVEL ERA--(1830-1860)

#### First Section.

Important Figures who Contributed to the Dime Novel.

Long before Cooper appeared on the scene in the 1820's to give America its first genuine taste of native literature, there had been others who had tried, tho unsuccessfully. Royall Tyler published a book of adventure in 1792, which he called, "The Algerine Captive," and in the same year, there appeared a sea and adventure story, "Fortune's

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Football," by James Butler. These tales were the first sea and adventure stories created by Americans. Soon after, George Brockden Brown (1771-1810) appeared. Brown wrote a number of novels, all crude and clumsy in construction, tho very imaginative, in plot. His chief claim to fame, however, was that he first wrote about the frontier. His "Edgar Huntley" was written with the purpose to call attention to the unlimited value of the Indians. This story, published in 1799, brought the hero in armed conflict with a band of Indians, from whom he rescued a beautiful white maiden. The story also dealt with Indian life. Brown wrote several other tales with such unattractive titles, as, "Arthur Merwyn"-"Weiland"-and "Ormand," but these early attempts met with an apathetic public response.\* (See "The Early American Novel" by Nellie D. Loshe. This little book far outranks the others on American literature; it is sincere, and contains some marvelous constructive criticism.)

There was a pause between Brown and the arrival of Cooper, except if you include Washington Irving (1783-1859). Irving, however, was the school-master, namby-pamby type, which seriously impeded his writing. Even to this day, you wonder whether he was an European or an American, so colorless were his works. His "Rip Van Winkle" might have stepped out of the Alps, for all the Catskill atmosphere, it had. "Nice" is the proper word for the mass of stuff he concocted.

When the 1830's blew in, they brought the force of Cooper's writings upon a new generation, which eagerly awaited his new books. In this decade, memorable in the annals of American literature, Poe and Emerson started on their rebellious course; Bird's "Nick of the Woods," appeared; the first crude story paper- Brother Jehnathan--was issued; and Simms, Ingraham, Herbert, and Ballou made their initial bows. From then on, there was no let-up in the deluge of native works.

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But most important of all was the opening of the Western frontier, to the eyes of the American people who literally ate up all the stories about the mysterious West. With the exception of Cooper, however, these prolific writers of the pre-Dime Novel era contributed nothing to creative literature. They merely imitated their master, Cooper, and continued the tale of the Western frontier, thus being the links in the chain between the originator of the Indian and trapper and the dime novelist.

The most important link of this chain, was Robert Montgomery Bird (1805-1854) who gave to the world, "Nick of the Woods." This story of the terrible vengeance wreaked on the Indians by Jibbenainosay, the white hunter, was sold in enormous quantities. In this book, Bird attempted to show the public that Cooper's romantic conception of the American Indian was false; that in reality, the red man was a mangy, treacherous rascal, fit only for the dogs. His hero, Jibbenainosay, slaughtered them by the scores, with many foul chuckles. So powerful a hold did this take have on the public, that for half a century, the Indian appeared in a deplorable light, in the history of the West. In England, the success of "Nick of the Woods" could be verified in the many imitations that followed--All portraying the Indian in the most despicable colors. The English preferred Bird's picture of the Indian to Cooper's, no doubt due to a white man's vanity. But the dime novelist (in F.W. Doughty and William G. Patten) appeared later to give the Indian his true character.

Another pre-dime novelist, William Gilmore Simms, (1806-1870) wrote about the Revolution and the early West. He produced the "Yemassee"--"The Partisan"--"The Scout"--"Border Beagles"--"Woodcraft" and many others.

Unlike Simms, his contemporary, Henry William Herbert, (1807-1858) became known for his sport writing. Herbert used the pen-name of Frank Forester, under which he achieved his fame. Tho he was born in England, Herbert started his literary work in New York, and he may be properly classified as an



American author. He was the father of American sports literature, being the first to use this medium of expression in America. He also wrote some historical stories that the public left coldly alone. His stories were more or less technical and autobiographical, and because of this, were uninteresting boresome affairs. Except that Herbert was the first to write on sports subjects, he contributed nothing to literature. His most important books were: "The Brothers" - "My Shooting Box" - "Ringwood, the Tower" - "The Deerstalker" - "Marmaduke Wyvill" - and "The Wigwam in the Wilderness". He also published some technical works on hunting and fishing, in which he imitated two contemporary Englishmen, Charles James Apperley ("Mimrod") and R.S. Sebtes \* (For list of published works of Herbert, see "Bibliography of H.W. Herbert" in Publisher's Weekly, Sept. 19, 1931.)

Joseph Holt Ingraham (1809-1860), another important link in the chain, laid the scenes of his stories in nearly every corner of the world. Among the many tales were: "The Red Arrow" - "The Eagle Crest" - "The Beautiful Cigar Vender" - Captain Kyd. - "Lafitte, the Pirate" - and "The Life and Adventures of Percival Mayberry". Later on, Ingraham became a minister, and gave up writing blood-and-thunder stories, as he called them, to devote the remaining years of his life producing religious stories. One of them, "The Prince of the House of David" became so successful that it outsold all his previous works lumped together.

Strange to say, one of the most powerful novelists of this period was a woman, Emma E.D.E.N. Southworth (1819-1899). She continued her amazing total of books into the second half of the century, up to the 1890's. She was, beyond question, the greatest woman writer America produced in the nineteenth century, and deserves a chapter unto herself. Of the nearly 200 books she wrote, "Ishmael, or, In the Depths", and its sequel, "Self-Raised, or From the Depths" were the highwater marks of her career.



These two volumes were sold in the millions, and today, they can still be had in a number of editions.

Edward C.Z. Judson (1822-1886), whose pen-name was Ned Buntline, contributed much to the development of the Dime Novel. Of the hundred odd novels he produced in his fantastic career as adventurer, soldier, publisher and editor, the following stood out: "Buffalo Bill"- "Ned Buntline's Life Yarn"- "Morgan, or, The Knight of the Black Flag"- "King of the Sea"- "The Red Revenger"- "The B'hoys of New York"- "Mysteries and Miseries of New York"- "The Indian Queen's Revenge"- "Sea Waif, or, The Terror of the Coast"- and "The Last of the Buccaneers".

Judson started writing about the sea, but turned to the West as the scene of his last stories. During one of his brief visits to the Middle West, about 1844, he started a weekly, Ned Buntline's Own. This venture got him into so much trouble that he was forced to flee East, after killing an enemy whom he had accused of graft, in his paper. Continuing this paper in New York, Judson published his own stories in it, as well as the works of other writers, but here, too, his fiery editorials got him into trouble.

About 1858, Ned Buntline's Own ended its career. This weekly was one of the first story papers, preceded only by Flag of Our Union in Boston. Judson's chief claim to fame, was that he first wrote about Buffalo Bill. On December 23, 1869, the story, "Buffalo Bill, the Scout of the Plains" was published in Street & Smith's New York Weekly. This was the first attempt at portraying living characters of Western fame, in a romance. He also cast glamor on the careers of Texas Jack (John B. Omohundro) and Wild Bill (J.B. Hickock) by writing stories about them.

Thus it can be seen how profound Judson's contribution was, to the Dime Novel. Tho he wrote stories after 1870, Judson can never be classified as a dime novelist. His style was the same as Ingraham's, whom he imitated freely, and he never improved.



His career was more brilliant as an adventurer, than as a writer.\*

(See "The Life and Adventures of Ned Buntline", by Fred E. Pond ("Will Wildwood"), for a more extended review.)

TO BE CONTINUED.

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THE GOLDEN AGE OF ENGLISH BOYS' LITERATURE.

A Bibliographical Review of Twenty Years Progress.  
1862-1882

Edited by Wm. J. Denmers.

Old-timer and reader-and-world's authority on serial story papers. (2nd Installment)

THE BOY'S OWN MAGAZINE; which, after the failure in business of S.O. Beeton, was published by Ward, Lock, and Tyler, likewise greatly degenerated until, in 1874, with the seventh volume of the second "new series" it gave up the ghost, having been in existence altogether for twenty years.

It is but fair to its original conductors, to add that had its level of excellence, reached in the years 1863-1866, been preserved, the magazine might have been still, a flourishing and popular book for boys.

When S.O. Beeton made THE BOYS' OWN MAGAZINE, sixpence, he issued, at the same time, a cheaper publication for those whose means was very limited. This was called the BOY'S PENNY MAGAZINE, but in 1864 its price was increased to twopence and its title changed to the BOY'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE. It was conducted by John Tillotson, and ceased issue in 1866. The volumes were called the "BOY'S YEARLY BOOK."

The BOY'S FRIEND, another illustrated monthly, published by Henry Lea, of Fleet Street, price 3d, appeared in June, 1864, but, altho it commenced well with stories by Percy B. St. John and W. Stevens Hayward, after a fluctuating existence it ceased publication with the eighth number of the fourth volume, in 1867. It had, after the tenth monthly number, been published by Houlston and Wright, and in 1865 was increased to fourpence and published by H.G. Clarke.



To return to the weekly form of journal for boys, inaugurated by the BOYS' MISCELLANY, there appeared on May 13, 1865, the first number of the BOYS' COMPANION AND BRITISH TRAVELLER, published at 147 Fleet Street, by the Newsagents Publishing Co. This moderate affair did not last, even for one year, having ceased publication with the thirty-third number, on December 23, 1865, after which it was incorporated with the BOYS' OWN READER, an illustrated weekly, one penny, which was commenced in January, 1866, under the editorship of Rev. G. D'Avey Irvine, and published by Gadsby Crane-court, Fleet Street.

The BOYS' OWN READER had a still shorter life, running only to sixteen numbers, and taking on, with its thirteenth number, the BOYS' HERALD, a similar journal which had started a week or two after the BOYS' OWN READER.

The year, however, was not destined to close without being marked by a signal success. This was the appearance on November 24, 1866, of the BOYS OF ENGLAND, conducted for the first nine numbers, by Charles Stevens (who also wrote the leading story, "Alone in the Pirate's Lair"), but afterwards and ever since, conducted by Edwin J. Brett.

The opening story by the editor was entitled, ("Alone in the Pirate's Lair", and the other two serials were "Who Shall be Leader" from the practised hand of Vane St. John-and-"Chevy Chase" by Cecil Stagg. Extra inducements to subscribers, were offered in the shape of gratis plates of Characters and Scenes for a miniature theatre, of a drama founded on the leading story; a large engraving depicting the meeting of Percy and Douglas on the field of Chevy Chase; and a coupon for a prize distribution.

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#### POPULAR AMERICAN NOVELS.

Item No. 13.--The BOYS' STAR LIBRARY-Size 7"x10", Two columns to a page-30 pages-Illustration on front cover-Black and White-Published by Frank Tousey, 34 and 36 No. Moore Street, New York.



Began publication in 1891-Featured some excellent stories: No.1-"The Wolf Men of Minnesota",by Howard DeVere; No.4-"Fox Cap,the Friend of Daniel Boone",by Kit Clyde; No.13-"Skeleton Saul",by Marline Manly; No.241-"Jack Wright and his Electric Deers,or, Fighting the Bandits of the Black Hills," by Noname. The Jack Wright stories were featured in this library.

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#### A JACK HARKAWAY ITEM..

Old-timers who were lucky enough in boyhood days to have had the fun of taking in every week,that grand story paper,FRANK LESLIE'S BOYS' & GIRLS' WEEKLY, in the 1870's,speak most enthusiastically of it.It was in this paper,that the Jack Harkaway stories were featured,Leslie bringing over Bracebridge Hemyng to write exclusively for him,after Hemyng had completed,"Jack Harkaway Among the Brigands," for Edwin J.Brett,the publisher of BOYS OF ENGLAND, in 1873. Brett missed Hemyng,however, and had other writers continue the Harkaway series, in his journal.

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#### This is a Reprint.

The original issue carried many interesting Ads by members of the Happy Hours Brotherhood and various collectors and dealers,including:

Guy Baumgardner- Ralph F.Cummings-

Fred T.Singleton- Charles Bragin-

Ralph P.Smith - Amateur Mart-

The Clayton Corral- Ed.F.Herdman-

Raymond L.Caldwell- Geo.H.Snyder-

Pearl A.Kneeco - "Deadwood Dick,Jr."-

J.Edward Leithead- Wm.M.Kreling-

Parks,Printer- Book Exchange.